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26 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Legislative Counsel
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT : Data for Senator Symington

1. The attached memorandum will fulfill two of three commitments concerning Vietnam made by the Director to Senator Symington at the recent Fulbright briefing.

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Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
Some Statistics on North
Vietnamese Manpower

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MEMORANDUM

Some Statistics On North Vietnamese Manpower

Losses (Killed)

1. Casualty statistics are subject to a number of biases that make highly accurate estimates of the number of Vietnamese killed extremely difficult to construct. Some statistics undoubtedly overstate Communist losses just as others understate them. The problem is also complicated further when we try to differentiate between NVA and VC losses. Subject to these caveats and untangling these statistics as best we can, we estimate that since 1965 North Vietnamese casualties in Indochina have been on the order of 600,000 men.

2. We can also approach the problem differently and get about the same result. We have much firmer data on the number of North Vietnamese that have infiltrated to South Vietnam or Cambodia and the number remaining there today. Because relatively few infiltrators have returned to North Vietnam the difference between these two numbers (total infiltration minus remaining NVA forces) gives us another estimate of North Vietnamese losses roughly equivalent to that given above. Finally, General Giap himself has confirmed the very high losses that have been suffered by the North Vietnamese. In an interview in April 1969 with Miss Oriana Fallaci, an Italian correspondent, Giap was told: "General, the Americans say you've lost half a million men." He answered: "That's quite exact."

Number of Males Reaching Military Age Annually

3. Our estimates of North Vietnam's population indicate that presently about 210,000 males are reaching the age of 17 each year. Of this total, we estimate approximately 70 percent, or 150,000, will be physically fit.

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